International Labour Organisation that only 36 per cent of employable women are actively engaged in labour market compared to 82.2 per cent men;

(b) if so, whether it is due to lack of suitable opportunities or congenial work environment like low wages, lack of social protection, etc., which keep employable women away from engaging themselves in labour market; and

(c) whether Government propose to launch special drive to evolve women-friendly engagement culture, through more education, specific training, so that women contribute towards economic growth of the country,and simultaneously raise their standard of living thereby?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) International Labour Organisation (ILO) in its report "Global Employment Trends for Women-2007" has indicated that in South Asia, 36% of the women are economically active as compared to 82.2% of men.

(b) Lower participation of women in the workforce is due to various factors like societal attitudes, low literacy rate, less trained women force etc.

(c) Under the National Policy for Empowerment of Women, Government is taking various measures to create an environment for the development of women through positive economic and social policies, to enable them to realize their full potential, greater employment and equal access to education and health.

In addition, Government has been running number of Programmes/ Schemes with a view to enhance and broaden the employment opportunities including self-employment and development of entrepreneurial skills of women. A number of training institutions have been set up by the Central Government in different parts of the country specifically for the skill training of women which include National and Regional Vocational Training Institutes.

**High unemployment rate among Christians**

3767. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Christians have the highest unemployment percentage in India, compared to other communities;

(b) what is the unemployment rate among the Christians in Central India;

(c) whether Government have any plan to offer special measures to generate employment among the tribal Christians in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan; and

(d) if so, the details of the projects proposed to be taken up during the next three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) Estimates of employment and unemployment among major religious groups in the country are obtained through quinquennial labour force surveys conducted by National Sample Survey Organization. Last such survey conducted pertains to the year 2004-05. As per this survey, unemployment rates as per usual status basis among major religious groups are given below:—

Unemployment rates (%) (as of labour force) during 2004-05

| Religious Groups | Rural | Urban |
|---|---|---|
| Hinduism | 1.5 | 4.4 |
| Islam | 2.3 | 4.1 |
| Christianity | 4.4 | 8.6 |
| Sikhism | 3.4 | 4.7 |
| All | 1.6 | 4.5 |

(b) Details of unemployment rate among the Christians in the States of Central India are given below:

| State | rural | Urban |
|---|---|---|
| Madhya Pradesh | 0 | 13.3 |
| Chhattisgarh | 0 | 0 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 0 | 2.0 |
| Uttranchal | 0 | 5.4 |

(c) and (d) Scheduled Tribes as per existing orders may profess any religion. As such, tribal Christians have equal access to employment opportunities being provided through special employment programmes

currently under implementation in the country including these states. These special programmes include Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana, Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana, Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana, Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana, Rural Employment Generation Programme, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, etc.

**Reduction in interest rate on EPF**

3768. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to reduce interest rate on EPF; if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(b) the reasons for the reduction of the rates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The rate of interest on EPF deposits for the year 2006-07 has not yet been recommended by the Central Board of Trustees, Employees' Provident Fund to the Government.

**Contribution of intellectual/skilled Labour to GDP**

†3769. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the contribution of intellectual or skilled labour to the GDP has increased after adoption of globalised industrialization policy a decade ago;

(b) if so, Government's assessment in this regard;

(c) the percentage of skilled and unskilled labour in the country at present and whether any target has been fixed to enhance availability of skilled labour in the years to come; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The contribution

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.